

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

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USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01

AID-05 ACDA-10 OMB-01 /098 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4947

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 1071

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0148

E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS: SF, AO, PFOR, MILI

SUBJ: MINISTER DEFENCE BOTHA COMMENTS ON ANGOLA

1. SUMMARY: IN PRESS INTERVIEW PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 12 SAG
MINISTER OF DEFENCE P.W.BOTHA ASSERTED THAT THERE WAS NOT
A SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE 'LINE' 50 KM. WITHIN ANGOLA, BUT
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DID NOT DENY PRESENCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS THERE. BOTHA

REPEATED SAG POSITION THAT ITS INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA PROMPTED BY SOVIET-CUBAN INTRUSION AND THAT WEST HAS MADE MISTAKE IN NOT CONFRONTING SOVIET AGGRESSION. HE SAID THAT SAG WOULD BE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE WITH A POSSIBLE MPLA GOVERNMENT IF SOUTH AFRICAN INTERESTS ARE RESPECTED AND IF MPLA SHEDS CUBAN AND RUSSIAN OUTSIDERS. END SUMMARY.

2. MIN DEFENCE BOTHA GRANTED INTERVIEW WITH NATIONAL PARTY SYMPATHIZER DIRK REZELMAN WHO CURRENTLY WORKING FOR RAND DAILY MAIL. INTERVIEW CARRIED IN THAT NEWSPAPER AND CAPE TIMES FEB 12. GIVEN REZELMAN'S POLITICAL LEANINGS IT NOT UNLIKELY TO ASSUME THAT HE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO ASSURE THAT BOTHA CORRECTLY QUOTED.

3. IN ANSWER TO REZELMAN'S QUESTIONS BOTHA REASSERTED THAT SOUTH AFRICAN INVOLVEMENT IN ANGOLA WAS RESPONSE TO SOVIET AND CUBAN AGGRESSION. HE STATED THAT WASHINGTON POST REPORTER BERNARD NOSSITER HAD MISINTERPRETED HIS COMMENTS ABOUT STATUS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S CURRENT FORCE IN ANGOLA. BOTHA SAID THAT THERE IS NO 'LINE' 50 KM. WITHIN ANGOLA, BUT DID NOT DENY PRESENCE OF SAG MILITARY THERE. MIN DEF STATED THAT IF COMMUNIST FORCES PUSH FURTHER SOUTH, SOUTH AFRICA WILL BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH THEM. SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES 'DO NOT HAVE AN ANSWER FOR EVERY SOVIET WEAPON, BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WE CAN MORE THAN HOLD OUR OWN'.

4. HE ASSERTED THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERESTS IN AREA IS TO SEE 'WHOLE REGION POLITICALLY STABILIZED UNDER A TRULY NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'. OTHER INTERESTS ARE PROTECTION OF CALUEQUE DAM AND RUACANA HYDROELECTRIC SCHEME. ALSO SAG CONCERNED BY FLOOD OF REFUGEES MOVING SOUTHWARD AND INTERESTED IN SAFEGUARDING SOUTH WEST AFRICA FROM CHAOS OF DYSTABILIZED AREA IMMEDIATELY TO THE NORTH. BOTHA EMPHASIZED 'THAT OUR RESPONSE TO THE COMMUNIST MILITARY THRUST IS FOCUSED ON THE SWA BORDER AND IN CERTAIN PARTS OF ANGOLA ONLY. OUR WISH IS THAT THE PEOPLE THERE REACH POLITICAL RESOLUTION TO THEIR PROBLEM SOON'.

5. MIN DEF SAID THAT SAG WOULD CONSIDER NEGOTIATING WITH A POSSIBLE MPLA GOVERNMENT IF REGION STABILIZED AND DEVELOPMENTS UNCLASSIFIED

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NOT UNDERMINED BY MPLA--'IN OTHER WORDS, IF THEY RESTRAIN THEMSELVES TO STAYING WHERE THEY BELONG'. DISCUSSIONS COULD BE HELD WITH MPLA REGARDING S.A.'S INTEREST IN AREA PARTICULARLY CALUEQUE DAM AND RUACANA SCHEME. BUT, BOTHA NOTED, 'HOW CAN WE NEGOTIATE WITH A POSSIBLE MPLA GOVERNMENT WHEN THESE FOREIGN NON-AFRICAN FORCES ARE BACKING THE MPLA?'

6. BOTHA STATES THAT SOVIET'S GOAL IS TO CAUSE CHAOS IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA AND TO ULTIMATELY CONTROL CAPE SEA ROUTE. HE SAID SOUTH AFRICA HAS LONG WARNED ABOUT COMMUNIST AGGRESSION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA BUT THAT WEST HAS PREFERRED TO IGNORE WARNINGS. WEST MUST BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR POSSIBLE SOVIET ARMED SUPERIORITY IN ANGOLA WHICH PROMPTED, IN PART, BY SUSTAINED ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA.

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